

## **ADDITIONAL VIEWS OF THE HONORABLE DAVID OBEY**

Once again, the President requested severe cuts in programs of vital interest to the Nation. Once again, the subcommittee's allocation, reflecting the budget agreed to by the Republican-controlled Congress, did not permit the full restoration of the cuts. Each year we applaud the Chairman for restoring a significant portion of the cuts but we ignore the long-term impact. This pattern has slowly eroded efforts to assist state and local communities over the years.

At the same time that States and local communities are taking on greater law enforcement and community building responsibilities, the Administration and the Congress are slowly withdrawing funds needed to meet these increasing demands. Since September 11, for example, local police have undertaken increased homeland security duties. Additionally, the sluggish national economy is forcing local communities to work harder to attract new businesses, maintain existing ones, and create new jobs. Yet, the Committee's bill will ask our State and local law enforcement agencies and community development organizations to do more in these areas with fewer resources. It cannot be done.

The President budget proposed slashing State and local law enforcement assistance grants by \$1.4 billion, a 46.2 percent cut from last year's level, and eliminating Economic Development Assistance program grants to distressed communities. While the Committee managed to repair some of the damage, this bill does not even get back to last year's levels.

**State and Local Law Enforcement:** The Committee bill restored \$1 billion for State and local law enforcement assistance. However, law enforcement grants are still cut by \$400 million from last year, and last year's level was \$226 million below the year before. Looking back to FY 2001, state and local law enforcement agencies will have to do more in FY 2006 with \$1 billion less.

Why is it important to restore funding to assist state and local law enforcement? Of the 44 largest metropolitan police departments, 27 have been forced to reduce the number of police on the streets. Cleveland, New York, Minneapolis, New Orleans, and many other communities, have reduced the number of police since September 11<sup>th</sup>. Shortages of officers and increased homeland security duties have led police chiefs to abandon labor-intensive but effective preventive policing practices. Not surprisingly, these police chiefs are reporting increased gang activity and other troubling indicators of violent crime.

According to the Department of Justice, every \$1 we invest in COPS grants contributes to a decline of 10 violent crimes and 27 property crimes per 100,000 residents. Moreover, numerous studies and surveys in the past three years have identified unmet critical law enforcement needs for hiring, training and technical assistance, as well as protective equipment and interoperable communications. In fact, the Independent Task Force on Emergency Responders, chaired by former Senator Warren Rudman, stated in its 2003 report that merely continuing funding levels would mean "America will fall \$98 billion short of meeting critical emergency responder needs over the next five years." Since that

report, and despite the best efforts of the Subcommittee Chairman, funding for state and local law enforcement assistance has been cut by \$1 billion.

**Economic Development Administration grants:** The Committee also restored \$200 million for Economic Development Assistance program grants above the President's request, but this is still \$53 million below last year's level. This is a 20 percent cut in one year and going back to FY 2001, EDA grants have been cut by about 50 percent.

Why is it important to restore EDA grants? EDA grants spark public and private investments that help create and expand business, and bring new jobs to struggling communities. In 2004, EDA investments helped create almost 126,000 new jobs, retain more than 34,000 jobs and leverage \$10.4 billion in private sector investments in our nation's distressed communities. For every \$1 million in EDA investments, another \$10 million is typically leveraged in private sector funds. EDA is also essential to small cities and rural areas. Nearly 85 percent of the nation's units of local government serve populations below 5,000 and almost 30 percent have no professional staff. As a result, smaller communities rely heavily on EDA-funded staff for professional and technical support.

The root of this bill's problems is this year's irresponsible and woefully inadequate budget resolution and the resolution did not happen by accident. Ironically, some of the same Members of Congress who voted for this budget resolution are now asking that we, as appropriators, help to increase funding for specific programs or activities. Either these Members possess a complete lack of understanding of the budget process or they are hypocritically asking this Committee to repair the damage that they themselves caused. It is absurd that Members register surprise that certain programs are reduced even when the budget resolution mandated those cuts.

The overall lack of funds to address national needs is the direct result of a Republican Budget Resolution for 2006 that provides \$11.7 billion less than the amount necessary just to maintain current service levels for domestic programs. As Majority Leader Tom Delay pointed out last month during debate on the Conference Report on the Budget Resolution, "This is the budget that the American people voted for when they returned a Republican House, a Republican Senate and a Republican White House last November."

This may not be the budget the American people voted for, but it is the budget the American people will receive under the current leadership in the White House and in the Congress.